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Coast pastor: years of work to be done

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

When the malevolent winds and unrelenting surge of Hurricane Katrina finally subsided two years ago this week, the sanctuary of First Church, Bay St. Louis, was no more. The venerable structure — or at least what was left of it — was buckled and warped beyond repair.

It was an especially difficult loss among the many losses caused by Katrina. The venerable sanctuary had originally served as the chapel of a U.S. Army camp near Centreville. When the chapel was declared surplus property shortly after World War II, church members bought it and carefully numbered each board as it was disassembled, trucked to Bay St. Louis, and reassembled on the church's property within sight of the Gulf of Mexico's surf.

The building had endured many of the large storms that frequently blew in from the Gulf every year during the hot, humid days of late summer, but the direct hit from Katrina was a death blow. The remains of the sanctuary were brought down after a special commemoration service was held.

Now all that is still standing of the sanctuary is the front portion, poignantly spray-painted with times and instructions on how to find the worship services currently being held in other parts of the church that were damaged but not destroyed by Katrina. Grass and watermelon vines now populate the hole where the sanctuary once stood.

"We're waiting on the architectural plans" for a new sanctuary, said Pastor Al Green Jr. "The storm isn't over. There's still years of work to be done."

With the realization of all the work that remains to be done along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, First Church, Bay St. Louis, has opened its doors to relief and recovery volunteers from all across the country since shortly after the storm.

"We feel our first obligation is to the community. The church has voted to continue housing volunteers at least through 2008," Green said.

The church can house and feed up to 150 volunteers each week. Work crews from Georgia, South Dakota, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and Mississippi have billeted at the church. A Baptist church from Murfreesboro, Tn., brings a work crew once every month and stays at the church. A German Baptist Convention volunteer group from Ohio has spent time at the church.

The Georgia Baptist Convention has used the church as its headquarters, after making



CLEANUP — Volunteers from Georgia and South Dakota survey the hole left by the demolition of the sanctuary of First Church, Bay St. Louis, after Hurricane Katrina destroyed that part of the church in August 2005. The church's pastor, Al Green Jr. (second from left), said much work remains to be done at the church and in the Bay St. Louis community. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

a two-year commitment that has brought hundreds of Baptist volunteers from that state to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The work crews are helping rebuild homes in Hancock County, where Bay St. Louis is situated, as well as next door in Harrison County. Government studies and secular news reports have indicated that the Gulf Coast is in critical need of affordable housing.

According to The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson, Hurricane Katrina destroyed thousands of public housing units and rental properties in the three Mississippi coastal counties.

"Most observers agree the availability of affordable housing remains the greatest hurdle for the Gulf Coast to overcome," wrote reporter Chris Joyner in the August 27 issue of the newspaper.

The members of First Church, Bay St. Louis, are intent on making a difference in its community. As affordable housing is rebuilt by the volunteers with financial and materials assistance from the Mississippi Baptist Convention and many other groups, Green is seeing the fruits of that ministry.

In an area of the Mississippi Gulf Coast with a large unchurched population, the efforts of Baptists to help people who can't help themselves have given residents a new way to look at Baptists, Green observed. "We're seeing a lot more openness to the church."

Lives are being changed, Green said, and not just among the Mississippians who need to know the Lord. "The work has had an impact on the volunteers who come here, too."

Groups that have come to the Coast to minister have seen their own people develop a deeper relationship with God, he said. There have been several professions of faith among the volunteer groups.

While the rest of the country has moved on to other headline-grabbing disasters and the focus on the Gulf Coast fades from the national memory, much ministry work remains to be done. "We're in uncharted waters," Green said. "There are still a lot of questions being asked."

Volunteers, financial assistance, and construction materials continue to be needed along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, two years after the storm. Ministry opportunities continue to be developed to meet the needs of the storm victims. Construction teams are needed to help build affordable housing from the ground up, as well as finish carpenters, electricians, and plumbers.

For more information on the continuing Baptist relief effort on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, contact Deanna Vail in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dvail@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org.



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Of midnights and gambling

As young people, most of us — yea, all of us — rolled our eyes and tried to look disinterested as our parents gave us the rote precautions and instructions before we left for a night on the town with our friends. To our protests that midnight was way too early to expect us to be back home, there was the standard, universal reply: "Nothing good ever happens after midnight."

We're older now, and we've learned (some of us the hard way, of course) that our parents were right. We've lived long enough to know that indeed nothing good ever happens after midnight. We've seen the consequences, if not in our own lives, then in the lives of people about whom we cared.

Sad to say, we haven't learned the same lesson about gambling. Like midnight, truly nothing good ever happens after gambling. Tim Donaghy is merely the latest, unfortunate example of that proverb.

Donaghy was a highly-regarded referee in the National Basketball Association (NBA) before he pled guilty on August 15 to federal charges of wire fraud and transmitting wagering information through interstate commerce, and agreed to cooperate in the ongoing federal investigation of gambling-induced corruption among the ranks of NBA referees.

The stakes were huge in the risky game Donaghy, an admitted gambling addict, was playing. Not only was he allegedly betting on NBA games in which he was one of the referees, he also allegedly consorted with mobsters who made a lot of money betting on Donaghy-officiated games. No one yet knows the extent of Donaghy's involvement with gamblers/mobsters, how many games if any were fixed, and how deeply the scandal will rock the NBA and professional sports in general.



One thing's for certain: Donaghy has gotten himself — and his family — in a mess. Associated Press (AP) reports that the Manatee County (Fla.) Sheriff's Office has been forced to provide around-the-clock protection at Donaghy's residence in Bradenton, due to threatening telephone calls Donaghy has received since he was revealed as the focus of the large-scale federal investigation.

Donaghy is married and has four young daughters.

"[H]e's probably talking, cooperating, and that's rattling the mob," said a family friend in a recent AP article. "I don't think [the Mafia] would take that very well."

In addition to the federal charges to which Donaghy pled guilty on August 15, Arizona officials are reportedly

investigating allegations that Donaghy fixed NBA games played in that state, which would give officials there jurisdiction to prosecute him under Arizona law.

All in all, Donaghy faces up to 25 years in federal prison and possibly more than a decade in the Arizona penitentiary — and Arizona probably won't be the last state to open an investigation involving him.

Donaghy seemed to have it all. He earned more than \$260,000 per year as an NBA referee, a salary about which most of us can only dream. He was at the top of his profession, having worked several championship playoff games. He lived in a very upscale neighborhood in a very upscale part of very upscale Bradenton, which is near Tampa on Florida's Gulf Coast.

Why did he do it?

With gambling addicts, "It's not about the money as much as the action," Arnie Wexler, a recovering gambling addict who now runs a hot line for problem gamblers, told AP. "It makes you feel like a big shot by being in on the action. The need for action drives you."

That same addictive chase for the ever-elusive "action" goes on every day in Mississippi's gambling halls, representing every socio-economic stratum in the state. It's why we've lost to prison so many husbands, wives, dads, mothers, police officers, lawyers, bankers, coaches, and just plain folks. Now, an NBA referee joins those ranks.

Tim Donaghy wasn't the first person to be both personally and professionally ruined by gambling, and he won't be the last. It is happening in our work places, our children's schools, our friends' houses, our governments, and even our churches. We are a spiritually poorer state and nation because of legalized gambling.

When will we learn our lesson? Perhaps we could ask Tim Donaghy about that.

The Associated Press reported Aug. 21 that one in four adults did not read a single book last year, according to a new poll.

"Of those who did read," the story said, "women and older people were most avid, and religious works and popular fiction were the top choices."

I wondered, though, if the stats were correct. I would have thought there to be more non-readers. The headline could have read, "3 out of 4 people read a book last year," which would have seemed like good news, but I suspect the number of people who read a book last year would be far less if we eliminated those who read only dime-store novel fiction.

In any case, we would do well to note this cultural phenomenon as it bears directly on the fortunes of the Gospel in our culture. Christianity is a book-religion. That is, all of its revelation about God's redemptive work in Christ is mediated to us in letters on a page.

We don't have photographs, telephone lines through time, or a living oral tradition. We have the Scriptures. Apart from them, we have no saving knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

GUEST OPINION:



Why literacy is so important

By Denny Burk
Dallas

Because Christianity is a religion of the book, where it spreads so too does a concern for literacy. That is why when Christianity expands its borders, it is often accompanied by the building of schools and other institutions of learning. Where literacy dies, so does a knowledge of and a love for the Bible.

Does it not make sense to interpret a decline in reading as a trend that works against the Gospel?

I believe the pervasive and invasive entertainment culture (TV, Internet, movies, etc.) smothers serious thinking and the reading of entire books. Americans by and large don't read serious books because they are entertaining themselves to

death. There simply isn't time to read the Bible, much less books on theology or doctrine.

Besides that, when you are conditioned to be in a constant state of being entertained, reading non-fiction becomes a chore and a bore.

Our hearts tend to fixate on vanity. It will be that way until the great day of our Lord's return. If we would be faithful to Christ, we would be conscientiously doing everything we can to work against these currents in the culture and within our own hearts.

It may mean throwing our televisions away. It may mean spending less time on the Internet — perhaps even reading less blogs. Whatever it

takes, it's worth it to redeem the time and to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness (Ephesians 5:16; 1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Because of my own sinful, disordered priorities, here's a prayer from Psalms that I have to pray often. Maybe you will too:

"Incline my heart to Thy testimonies,

"And not to dishonest gain.

"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity,

"And revive me in Thy ways.

"Establish Thy word to Thy servant,

"As that which produces reverence for Thee"

— Psalm 119:36-38

I have a hunch this is exactly the kind of prayer the Lord likes to answer.

Burk is assistant professor of New Testament at Criswell College in Dallas. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Korean Christians struggle to define role

SEOUL, South Korea (BP) — A large sign outside the multi-story Shinsegae department store in downtown Seoul reads, "Pray for the safe return of the hostages in Afghanistan." It is written in Korean, Arabic and English.

As Korean Christians pray, church and mission agency leaders are struggling with how best to adapt to environments and cultures where a Christian presence is unwelcome and often dangerous. They are discussing how best to complete the task of taking the Gospel to "the ends of the earth," while protecting those under their watch who have been called to difficult places.

At the request of the Korean government, plans are underway to remove all Korean Christian workers from Afghanistan.

"We hope that this is only temporary," said Jae Kyeong Lee, president of the Korean Foreign Mission Board of the Korea Baptist Convention, "and that we will have opportunity to send workers back soon, but we want to be sensitive to the safety of the hostages and to the request of our government."

The Korean government currently is negotiating with Taliban militants over the fate of 19 hostages remaining in Afghanistan. A group of 23 Korean aid workers, mostly women, from Saemmul Presbyterian Church was kidnapped by the Taliban on July 19 while riding aboard a bus in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan.

Two of the male hostages, 42-year-old church staff member Hyung Kyu Bae and 29-year-old Sung Min Shim, were executed by the Taliban. Two of the women volunteers, Ji Na Kim, 32, and Kyung Ja Kim, 37, were released and returned to Seoul on Aug. 17.

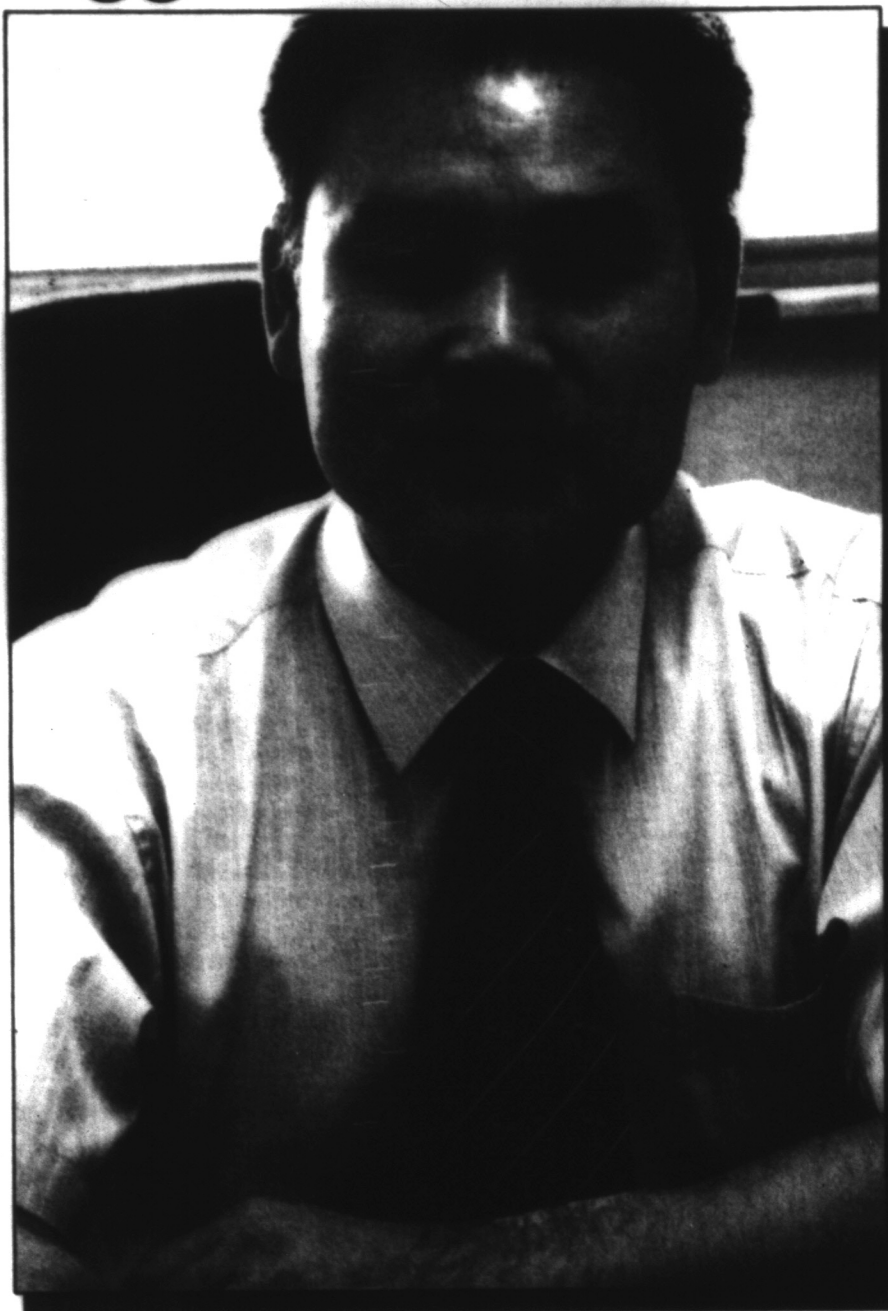
According to the JoongAng Daily News, both women expressed their thanks to the government and the people of Korea and apologized for causing "all this worry" during a news conference that lasted less than five minutes. The two women answered no questions and were whisked away by security guards and government officials. They will remain under government protection for an unspecified period.

JoongAng News has reported that the Korean government is concerned that extensive news coverage could jeopardize ongoing negotiations with the Taliban for the release of the remaining hostages.

It is this same concern that is prompting calls from the government for all Korean Christian workers to withdraw from Afghanistan and for churches in Korea to avoid public prayer services or other public expressions of support for the hostages.

While other Christian workers in Afghanistan understand the government's concerns, they are struggling over the departure of their Korean friends. One worker who asked not to be identified said, "We are grieving the loss of our Korean brothers and sisters. These people were doing amazing work here and amazing work for the Kingdom. I know that there is a lot of criticism of the Korean hostages that are being held, but they are such sweet, gentle people who came here with pure hearts to truly help."

Lee is praying that church and agency leaders will grow through this crisis in spite of criticism from some quarters against missions efforts. "We recognize



Lee

that our work cannot be stopped in spite of martyrdom and that we must continue to send out those who are called," Lee said. "However, as leaders, we need to be wiser and more mature in our sending policies. We need to do more research into the areas where workers are called and we need to be more prepared to deal with crises such as this one."

Since the early 1900s, the Korean church has sent more than 14,000 Christian workers to countries around the world. In recent years, South Korea has become second only to the United States as a mission-sending

country. The Korean Foreign Mission Board, for example, has 580 workers in 48 countries.

"Korean mission agencies have a goal to send 100,000 workers to countries around the world by 2030," Lee said. "In the past we have bragged about the willingness of our people to go to dangerous places with little thought to what that danger might actually involve. Now, we know that we must also concern ourselves with the safety of our personnel and show greater maturity as we approach our task."

Women's leader killed

MOBILE, Ala. (BP) — Tammy Litton, 47, who led a large women's ministry at First Baptist North Mobile, Ala., and whose husband Ed is a past Southern Baptist Convention first vice president as well as pastor of First Baptist North Mobile, died Aug. 16 after crashing into the back of a stalled 18-wheeler on U.S. 98 in Greene County, the Mobile Press-Register reported. Her 13-year-old daughter Kayla was taken to an area hospital and released. Litton, a talented singer and musician, was taking her daughter to Hattiesburg to meet a music professor and talk about possible cello coaching for Kayla, the newspaper said. The funeral was held Monday, Aug. 20. The stalled 18-wheeler that Tammy Litton struck apparently had run out of gas, the Press-Register reported, and was sitting in the right lane, with cones around it. That particular stretch of highway is straight, and it was not raining. Staff Sgt. James Snyder, a spokesman for the Mississippi Highway Patrol, told the newspaper. "It looks like she veered at the last moment," he said. Tammy Litton led the church's women's ministry, which holds special women's events two to three times each year, drawing hundreds. At each event, the women also invite women struggling with alcohol and drug addiction who don't have a church and who have been seeking help at the local Home of Grace addiction ministry. Litton was heavily involved in the music ministry and was director of the church's new music school, which provides private instrument, voice, and theater lessons for children and youth. In 2003 she served as the recording secretary/treasurer at the SBC annual meeting's Ministers' Wives Conference. In addition to her husband, Tammy Litton leaves behind three children: Joshua, 20, Tyler, 18, and Kayla.

Looking back

10 years ago

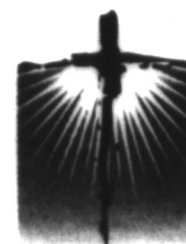
Keith Wilkinson, director of the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, departs to be Sunday School director/discipleship and adult ministry specialist for the Oklahoma Baptist Convention.

20 years ago

Sebastopol Church honors Mildred Etoile Majure Easom with a special day commemorating her 55 years of service to the church. Easom, affectionately known as Ms. Etoile, is presented an engraved plaque by her pastor, John Sharp. The day is proclaimed Ms. Etoile Day.

30 years ago

R.A. McLemore, former dean of Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg, becomes president of Mississippi College, the first new president in 25 years.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

*Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:*

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritu-
al guidance.*

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A NEW COIN ON THE BLOCK

The United States Treasury and the folks at the U.S. Mint stay in a constant mode of upgrading and updating our money. The bills that came out a few years ago with a new and distinct look seem to be working well and seem to be well accepted. The new nickel that came out and the state quarters also seem to have received an okay welcome by most Americans. For several decades now, the one-dollar coin has seemed to run into trouble. In the past probably the main criticism was that it looked too much like and was too close to the size of the quarter, but now there is a new coin on the block. The latest new coinage is the Presidential Dollar.

My first encounter with the new coinage came before I ever saw it. I began to receive e-mails and phone calls from people who were terribly upset and were calling for everyone to reject the new coin. The big problem was that the new coin had left off both "In God We Trust" and "E Pluribus Unum." I received numerous pictures of the new dollar coinage and decided to investigate as best I could what was going on with the dollar. Quickly I discovered that what was being said was both true



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

and false, for while the meaningful icon statements were left off of the front or back of the coin, I learned that they were etched on the edges of the coin in order to provide a new coin and a new look for the two statements. Without seeing the coin, I thought that was not a bad idea. I remembered seeing coins from other countries in years gone by that have a similar identification around the edge and I thought it was a neat idea.

Later, I saw one of the new gold colored presidential dollar coins and immediately held it up to look on the edge wanting to read "In God We Trust" and "E Pluribus Unum." My first thought was that I needed to call my optometrist. I thought I had good eyesight and, in fact, I do, but even though I knew what it said, I could hardly distinguish the writing. Personally, I like the gold tint, and I also like the fact that all of our presidents

will be remembered in the coinage — but unless they are going to provide magnifying glasses each time you receive some change so that you can read "In God We Trust," I am significantly unimpressed.

Through the years, there have been those voices that have called for the removal of "In God We Trust" from all of our money. There are groups and movements that want to carve God out of every vestige of our society. They want to take "Under God" out of our Pledge, "In God We Trust" off our money, prayer from the schools and any other public gathering, and the Bible from courtrooms. Any semblance of faith must be thrown out of all our public arenas. I do not know what kind of discussions went on about the new presentation of "In God We Trust." I am not privy to information as to who sat at the table or what kind of theological or creative artistic ideas were kicked around in the conversation. All I know is that though it is still

on the coin it does not enjoy the prominence that it has had on our money in decades gone by.

I am not so naïve as to think that simply because we use money that says "In God We Trust" we are a godly nation. Nor do I believe that saying "One nation under God, indivisible..." constitutes a heartfelt prayer pointed toward the Lord, but I do believe that there is significant national verbiage that reminds us of who we are, who He is, and from whence we have come. From the very outset of establishing this country there has been a measure of desire to look to God, to trust God, and to walk with God in establishing a nation of freedom, fairness, and righteousness. It only takes a few minutes to read the flowery language that formed that one page document that moved us in the direction of forming a new nation.

In the opening statements, The Declaration of Independence refers to God twice. In the closing statements, it refers to God two more times. He was important then to those Founding Fathers and to our continuing leaders He must be important now. God has blessed our past, and our future will rest in His hands. We will do well as individuals and as a nation to reaffirm clearly, unmistakably, and authentically: "In God We Trust."

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0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.*

Oldest Baptist church west of Miss. River restored

JACKSON, Mo. (BP) — Not far from the Mississippi River, sweet-sounding tones of the harpsichord and fiddle mingled with the chirping of the cicadas to accompany the voices of the faithful in well-worn hymns.

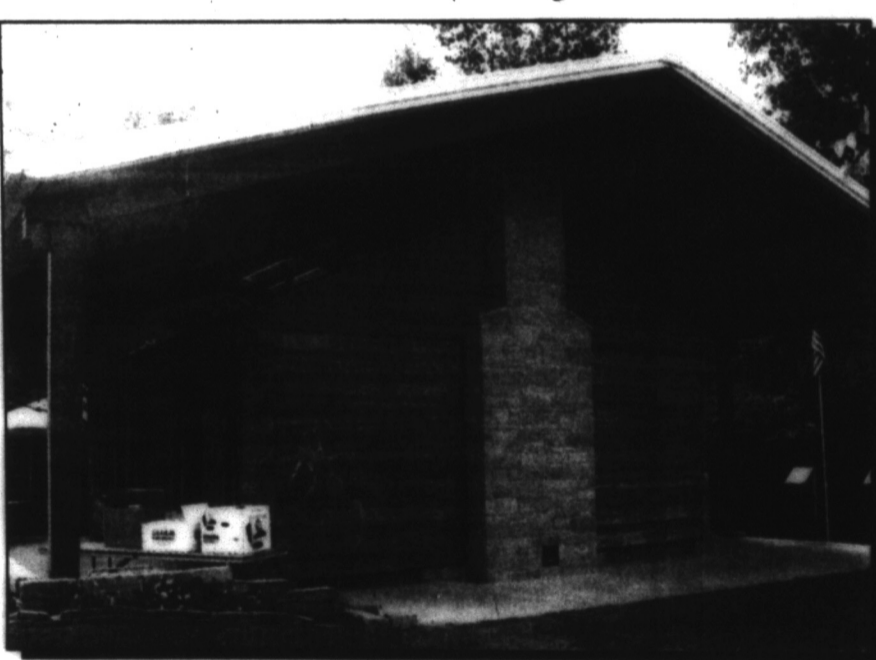
It might have been 201 years ago in 1806, when the first permanent Baptist house of worship and non-Catholic congregation west of the Mississippi River was established — but the date was August 18, 2007, a day of remembering God's promises of the past and for the future as Missouri Baptists joined with Gov. Matt Blunt and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Frank Page to celebrate the reconstruction of "Old Bethel."

Prior to 1806, it was illegal, not to mention dangerous, to worship as a non-Catholic in what was then French-controlled territory. Protestants certainly were not free to organize publicly until the United States entered into the Louisiana Purchase and made freedom of religion the law of the land.

After several false starts, worshipers organized Bethel Baptist Church near what would become the town of Jackson in southeast Missouri's Bootheel.

"I think of how those people persevered and suffered. They were so determined to cross the Mississippi and start this church," said Melvin Gateley, a member of the Missouri Baptist Historical Commission and the coordinator for the reconstruction project.

Page spoke to the crowd of 300 about the power of mission in a territory that was lost.



RECONSTRUCTED — The newly rebuilt structure of "Old Bethel" Church sits under its protective awning in southeast Missouri. Pioneers built the original building in 1806. The reconstruction, which used the original poplar logs and took three years, was dedicated Aug. 18. (BP photo)

"The tradition of 'Old Bethel' began not from a philosophy or a movement made in the heart of man, but it was a movement and theology based in the heart of God," the SBC president said. "That which drove those early settlers to cross that river and establish this church was a calling that runs through the heart of every born-again believer. The heart of missions is the Lord Jesus."

"Today we reiterate the call of missions and the power of missions: to drive people across the Mississippi River to come and establish a work for the Lord. Now today we

do stand in a great cloud of witnesses that have gone before and we realize their lives were based on sacrifice and commitment because of Jesus. The power of mission is why we're here today."

Because of those pioneers' commitment to missions and the grace of God, the church grew and prospered. They planted new churches all over the area and sent out dozens of missionaries. Unfortunately, they were plagued by infighting and anti-missionary philosophies and disbanded in the 1860s.

After the Civil War, the building was dismantled and, until 2002, the logs were thought to be lost until they were located about a mile away in a barn. Second Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo., bought them and donated them to the Missouri Baptist Convention in the hopes that they could one day be used to rebuild Old Bethel.

The building now stands completely restored as is the cemetery surrounding it. Second Baptist not only donated the logs but supplied a large portion of the volunteer labor that painstakingly replaced each log in its original position. Blunt, one of Second Baptist's members, praised the founders of Old Bethel for their commitment to religious freedom. "Our freedom, as best described in the Declaration of Independence, comes from God, not government," the governor said. "It sounds obvious today, but it was revolutionary then."

N.C. WMU to vacate state convention office

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) has voted to move out of the state convention offices, citing a disagreement over hiring practices and a desire to serve other groups including churches affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

During a conference call Aug. 16, the WMU-NC executive board voted 23-1 to move the organization's offices out of the Baptist State Convention building in Cary and to assume responsibility for its own human resources policies and payroll, according to a release by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC).

The decision to relocate stems from liability concerns expressed by state convention administrators who believe the convention's executive director should have final authority over WMU-NC employees. In past admin-

istrations, the executive director played a minimal role, although WMU-NC staff members are employees of the convention.

"I am grieved that the long standing relationship between the BSCNC with WMU of NC has moved to this level of consequential uncertainty," Milton Hollifield, executive director of the BSCNC, said in a statement Aug. 21. "We have participated in more than 16 months of dialogue, and it was my hope that this process had helped move us forward together. However, BSCNC leadership was not given the opportunity to discuss this surprise vote by WMU."

"Anytime we are we faced with the desire of an entity to separate from BSCNC it is a terribly unsettling circumstance," Hollifield added. "I am saddened to see that our long standing relationship of trust and accountability has eroded."

Ruby Fulbright, executive director of WMU-NC, said in a written statement that the relocation decision "should not be interpreted as a departure from the organization's commitment to supporting and promoting missions through the BSCNC, nor as a lack of appreciation for the mutual partnership the organizations have enjoyed in the past."

The WMU has received a preliminary offer of alternative office space in the Raleigh area at a reasonable cost, Fulbright said, and has asked the Baptist building for a nine-month transition period to transfer insurance and payroll responsibilities.

Fulbright said WMU-NC would continue to work with North Carolina churches to promote missions through the state convention. The organization also wants to continue receiving funds through the North Carolina Missions Offering.

STATE CHANGES



1. Flynt and wife Marie

1. Matt Flynt has been called as pastor of New Home Church, Smith County, effective May 6. He graduated from Mississippi State University and is attending New Orleans Seminary. He was former-



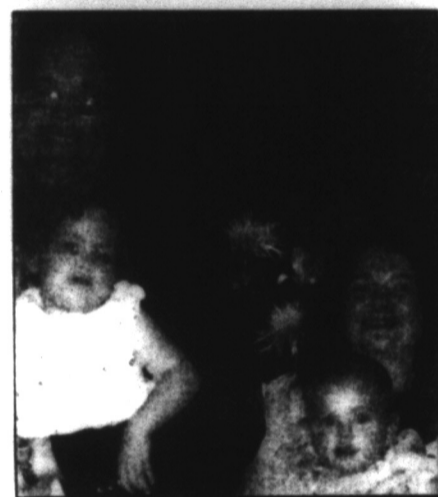
2. Mitchell and wife Nelda

ly youth minister at Edon Church, Stringer, and is married to Marie Johnsey of Clinton.

2. Lowrey Memorial Church, Blue Mountain, has called Ron Mitchell as pastor effective July 22. He is shown with his wife, Nelda.

3. First Church, Lauderdale, has called Ryan Culpepper as pastor. He comes with his wife Katie and daughters Savannah and Sarah Kate from Sandhill Church, Lake. He holds degrees from East Mississippi Community College, Mississippi College, and Southwestern Seminary.

4. River Bend Church, Aberdeen, has called Troy Carter as part-time youth pastor. He has attended Southwestern Seminary, and lives in Aberdeen with his wife Sheryl and daughters Kayla and Caroline.



3. Culpepper and family

5. Midway Church, Jackson, has called William T. Wright as pastor effective Aug. 19. He graduated from Blue Mountain College and attended New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife Carol come from McDowell Road Church, Jackson.



4. Carter



5. Wright

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DG IZ YLBD BDG YHXM
HT BXIBD, BDRB YG
ZDHIPM JG R WLUL HT
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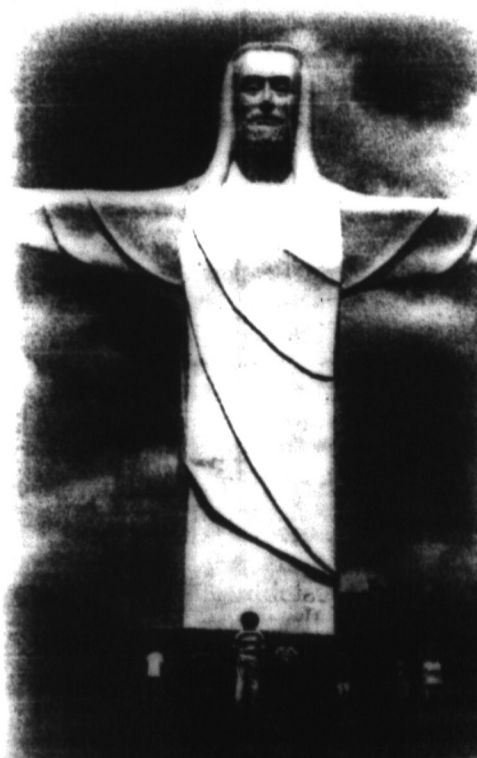
SRCGZ HUG: GLNDBGGU

Clue: T = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews Thirteen: Eight.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Baptism Candidates, Calvary Church, Ellisville



5. Baby Dedication, McAdams Church, McAdams



2. Deacon Ordination, Oak Hill Church, Meridian

1. Calvary Church, Ellisville, has added 43 new members since the beginning of 2007. Thirteen were baptized Aug. 5 at West Ellisville Church since Calvary is without a baptistery due to construction on their new sanctuary which began in April. Shown are several of the baptismal candidates.

2. Oak Hill Church, Meridian, recently ordained Sonny Toms as deacon. Shown are Toms and pastor Mike Russell.

3. The GAs of First Church, Picayune, participated in the Christmas in August WMU project. Shown are the participants.

4. The GAs and RAs of Hope Baptist Church, Neshoba Association, collected \$301.36 for Pure Water Pure Love, a ministry of WMU. The purpose of this ministry is to provide missionaries and the people they serve with clean drinking water. Shown are the participants.

5. McAdams Church, McAdams, recently held a baby dedication service. Shown are Conner Ethan Barber with his parents Cecil and Tammy, along with pastor James Young.

6. First Church, Mendenhall, recognized two of its Sunday School teachers who have been teaching for over 50 years. Shown, from left, are Eula Mae Dyer and Bennie Sue May.

7. Joel Young and Clifton Hodges, college students from Calvary Chapel, Parchman, worked on the baptistery of El Shaddai Church, Ebano, Mexico, during a mission trip this summer.

8. Four deacons from First Church, Laurel, are shown at Dale Holifield farm in Jasper County, shucking corn and smoking beehives. Shown are Doyle Wheat, Norris Wallace, Bob Holifield, and Warren Rayborn.



6. Dyer and May Recognized, First Church, Mendenhall



3. GAs, First Church, Picayune



7. Young and Hodges in Mexico, Calvary Chapel, Parchman



4. GAs and RAs, Hope Church, Neshoba Association



8. Deacons at Dale Holifield farm, First Church, Laurel



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FALL 2007

"Love God ... Love People"



Daniel Hall
Executive Director
Mississippi Baptist
Foundation

Nearly every year for more than a decade, I have had the privilege of accompanying one or both of my sons to watch a Major League baseball game. Most of these outings have been to Atlanta to see the Braves in action. My first experience to see the "big" Braves was to Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta when my oldest son Dan (now a college freshman) was in the second grade. We had great seats that were located just a few rows behind the Braves' dugout. We were close enough to read the names on the back of the jerseys and take pictures as the players move to the "on deck" circle and took their practice swings prior to stepping up to the plate.

Our first visit to see the Braves was memorable for both of us. Being a participant in youth baseball leagues and a devoted Braves fan, Dan enjoyed the excitement and hoopla associated with professional baseball. I likewise enjoyed the thrill of being in a Major League sporting complex. Yet, my bigger and more personal thrill was the opportunity to spend

time with my son and participate in an activity we both enjoyed. And, in some small way, my prayer was that our time together would be the beginning of a legacy of love that all of my children would remember throughout their lives.

In the years since that first visit, we have traveled to Atlanta or to Houston to see Major League ball games. On some of these occasions, I took a host of elementary-aged boys to these locations by myself (talk about bravery, naivety, etc.) and on other occasions, my wife and daughter accompanied my sons and me to these games. On one of our more recent trips to watch the Braves play the New York Mets, Dan commented on the size of the stadium, the number of fans, the noise, the marketing efforts to attract fan support, the availability of clothing and other Braves souvenirs, and all of the technology involved in the scoreboard and replay screens. Then he offered a truth that seemed a bit profound to me by stating, "It is still the same game of baseball that I played in Little League."

**Invest
your life and
resources
in a tangible
manner to
Love God and
Love People.**

Dan's observation of the parallels between Little League and Major League was interesting and accurate. In other words, once all the "extras" associated with professional baseball are peeled away, the game looks remarkably similar to Little League ball. Such a comparison may be appropriate on a more spiritual level. Although the means and methods of delivery may have been enhanced and revised since the first century, the truths that Jesus presented through the Great Commandments and the Great Commission remain steadfast. In essence, followers of Jesus Christ are not only challenged to **Love God and Love People**, but also to be intentional about helping others pursue a genuine love relationship with the Lord.

This newsletter presents the story of two families whose strong desire to honor Christ's instructions led them to partner with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation as a "laborer together with God." Prayerfully, you will receive encouragement from these examples of Christian stewardship and explore similar avenues to invest your life and resources in a tangible manner to **Love God and Love People.**



Deborah Quinnelly Mission Trust ... the ministry continues

Over a decade ago, God began a significant new work in Copiah County as several Mississippi Baptists responded to the opportunity to launch a ministry for the growing number of Hispanic residents of Hazlehurst and other nearby areas. Representing several Baptist churches, folks such as Albert Parsons, Bob Bozeman, David Patterson, and Ray and Deborah Quinnelly determined from a survey that over 300 people whose primary language was Spanish lived in the county. After consultation with John McBride (AMD for the Copiah Baptist Association) and Neron Smith (Spanish Coordinator for the MBCB), a small group of concerned individuals began showing love to the Hispanic population by teaching English as a Second Language (ESL).

The churches of the Copiah Baptist Association responded enthusiastically as Gallman Baptist Church served as the site for the first teacher training and Damascus Baptist church hosted the first ESL course. Other churches became involved by bringing meals to the ESL participants as they met to learn the English language.

Ray and Deborah Quinnelly were two of the primary leaders in the early stages of the

Hispanic work in Copiah County. Deborah was one of the first teachers to become ESL certified. In addition to her involvement as a teacher, Deborah helped coordinate the meal preparation and delivery schedule for the various churches. Deborah also was instrumental in acquiring a school bus to transport ESL students to their classes.

As a result of the good response from ESL, Hispanic worship services began at Damascus Baptist Church where David Patterson served as pastor. Later the group moved to Westside Baptist Church for a period of time. Sardis Baptist Church where Albert Parsons was pastor became the home of the Hispanic work prior to a move to the First Baptist Church of Hazlehurst. Following a stint at FBC, the ministry location shifted to the campus of the Copiah Baptist Association where worshippers met in a mobile chapel provided through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

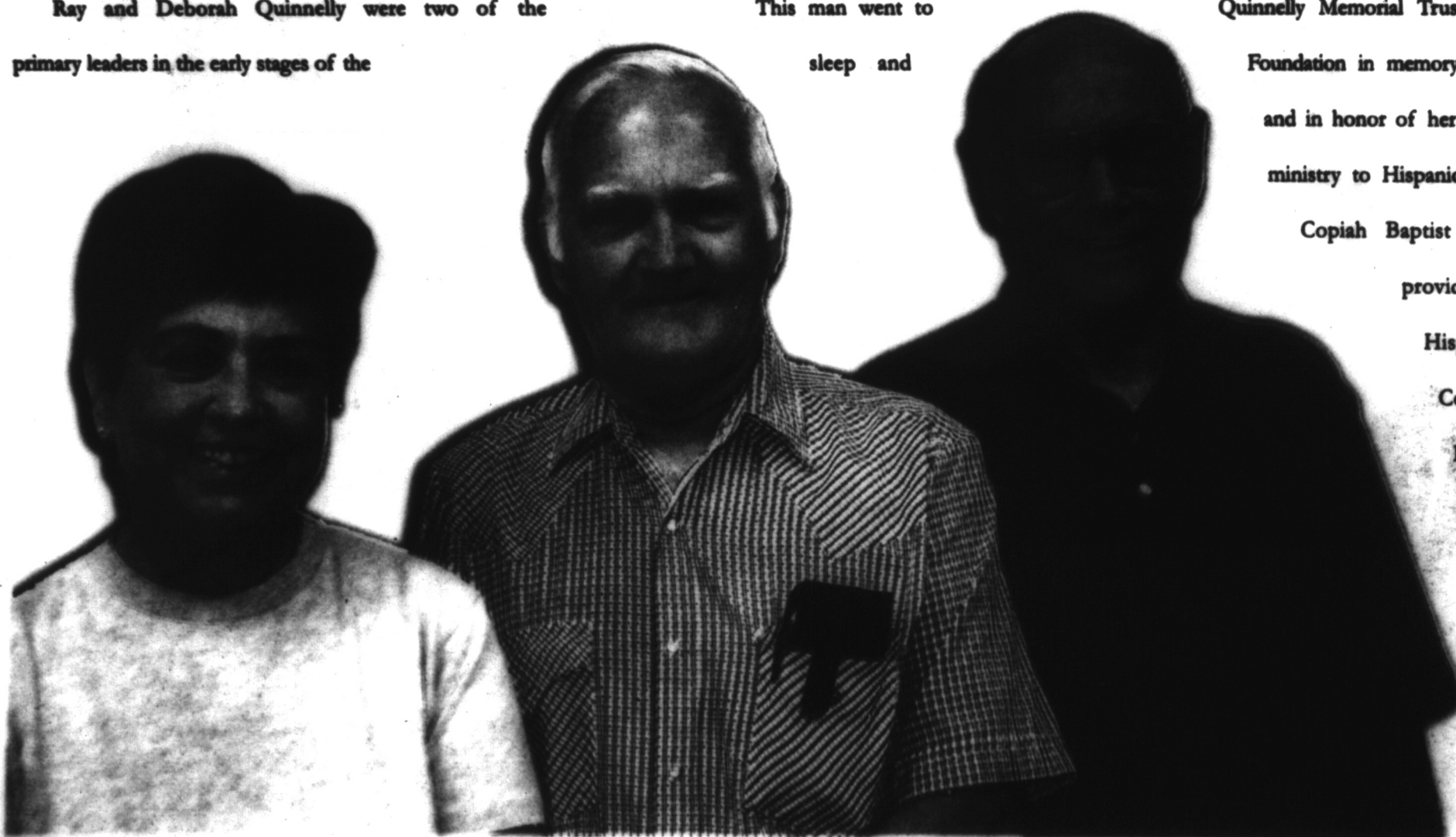
Ray Quinnelly was privileged to preach to the group through an interpreter. Ray related an incident of a "sloppy drunk" stumbling into a worship service during the early days of the Hispanic ministry.

This man went to sleep and

fell off the pew. Although some in the service wanted the man to leave, Ray insisted that the drunk not be thrown out. Some years later, a team traveled to Guatemala for a mission trip. While there, they encountered this same man who had become a preacher in Guatemala. As a result of God's movement in the hearts and lives of a few Copiah Baptists, the message of Jesus Christ is making an impact locally and globally.

Today the *Iglesia Bautista Agua Viva* (Living Water Baptist Church) meets once again in facilities provided by FBC Hazlehurst. Although the latest census listed approximately 400 Hispanic residents in the county, the total is likely several times that number. Jose Roberto Ruiz currently serves as the pastor of Living Water and his passion for this ministry is evidenced by the numerous Hispanic Bible study groups that he has helped cultivate in areas beyond Copiah County.

As the AMD of the Copiah Baptist Association, Dr. Pat Bufkin continues to be supportive of the outreach efforts to Hispanics within the county. Through his encouragement, Ray Quinnelly recently established the "Deborah Quinnelly Memorial Trust" with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation in memory of his wife who died recently and in honor of her untiring efforts to establish the ministry to Hispanics through the churches of the Copiah Baptist Association. This fund will provide supplemental monies for Hispanic ministry in Copiah County and beyond until our Lord returns.



Shown left to right:

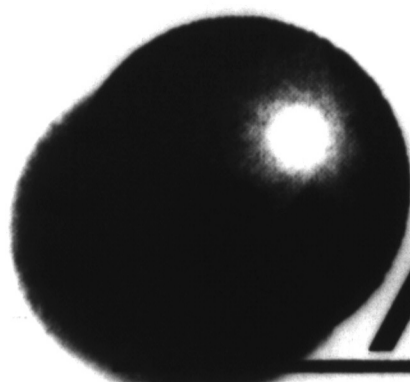
Vickie Warren, Ministry Assistant, Copiah Baptist Association; Ray Quinnelly, and Dr. Pat Bufkin, AMD, Copiah Baptist Association

The Gilliam-Thetford Memorial Trust ... a light that shines

Approximately two years ago, Burnita Thetford from Lincoln County called the Foundation office inquiring about ways in which she could favor Kingdom ministries utilizing the services of the MBF. Burnita explained how the Lord had given her the opportunity to do something tangible and significant for him as a result of the death of two family members who had bequeathed a sizeable amount of money to her.

During that initial phone conversation, Foundation staff explained how a Charitable Remainder Trust or a Gift Annuity would allow for immediate tax advantages, offer an income for life, and provide perpetual financial resources for the Baptist cause or causes of her choosing. After listening politely, Burnita indicated that her desire was to "just give the money outright" with no income stream coming to her. Burnita went on to explain that she wanted to promote the Kingdom during her lifetime as well as beyond her days on the earth.

During the conversation that followed, Burnita shared how an article in the Baptist Record written by Jim Futral, executive-director treasurer, MBCB, in the Fall of 2003 — nearly two years prior to her call to the MBF office — had influenced her life in a positive manner. She said that the article



International Mission Board

S O U T H E R N B A P T I S T C O N V E N T I O N

was about being a lightning bug and leaving the light burning in the present and in the future. Although Burnita was in her 80s and struggled to talk on occasion due to some respiratory challenges, she expressed her desire to let her light shine brightly for the Lord. Within that particular *Directions* article, Dr. Futral promoted the ministry of the MBF by stating:

"Another way that people leave their light burning is through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. The Foundation is an integral part of the work of Christ in our state. More and more people are becoming aware of the fact that when they are gone, they are able to leave in place investments that can go on touching lives, helping our institutions or agencies, caring for children, scholarships (for) students, and supporting our missionaries. The Mississippi Baptist Foundation is not just a financial institution, it is a ministry that enables us to leave the light on when we are gone."

The Lord called Burnita to higher service just a few weeks ago. At her funeral, the pastor mentioned the generous spirit with which she lived her life as he acknowledged her stewardship through the Mississippi Baptist

Foundation. The "Gilliam-Thetford Mission Trust" that Burnita established will provide income for student scholarships at out Baptist colleges in Mississippi and for mission efforts through the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board until our Lord returns.

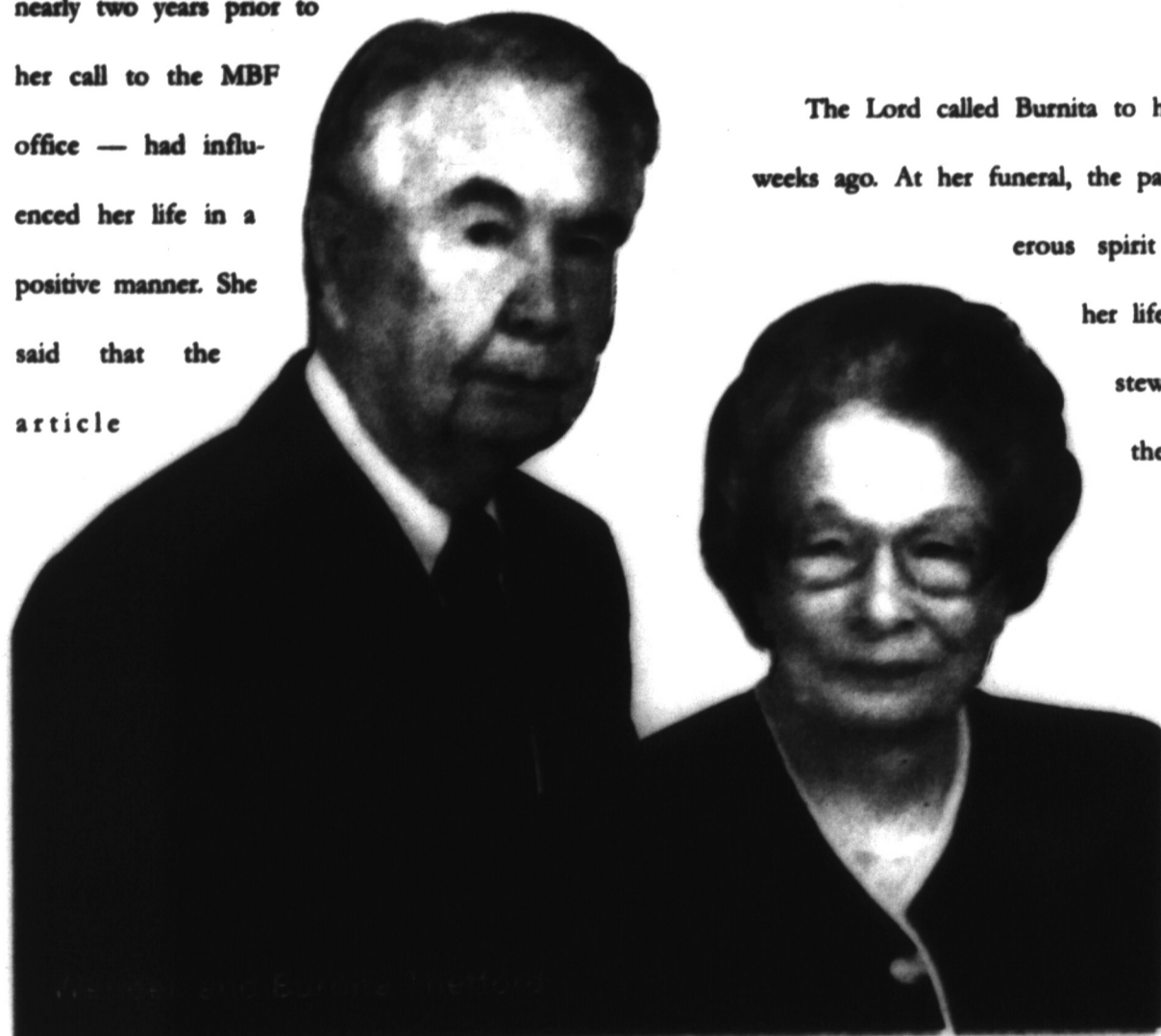


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#	CHARITY	4
#	GUARDIAN	5
#	EXECUTORS	6

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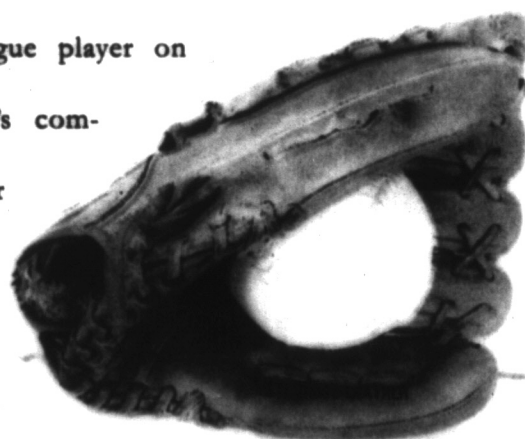
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During the past several days, I have seen bits and pieces of the Little League World Series. As I watched those pre-teen boys, I was amazed at their poise and athletic prowess. Because many of them listed their favorite Major League player on their personal data sheet, I was reminded of my son's comment about the close parallel between Little League and Major League baseball.

In the final analysis, nothing has changed with respect to the privilege and responsibility that those who follow Jesus have for edifying the Kingdom. Not only are we charged to



Love God and Love People, Jesus informed His followers that the world will recognize His disciples by the love that they exhibit.

Both the "Deborah Quinnelly Mission Trust" and the "Gilliam-Thetford Memorial Trust" are unique and tangible expressions of loving God and loving people. September is designated as Baptist Foundation month and your friends at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation would be delighted to visit with you concerning ways in which you, like Deborah Quinnelly and Burnita Thetford, can establish your own legacy of love.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



1. Castlewoods Church, Brandon and Lakeshore Church, Lakeshore



2. Rocky Point Church, Carthage



3. West Marks Church, Marks



4. Mt. Vernon Church, Eupora



5. First Church, Oloh

1. **Castlewoods Church, Brandon, and Lakeshore Church, Lakeshore:** July 15-20; Castlewoods hosted the VBS at Lakeshore, with Castlewoods members also ministering to Lakeshore members and aiding in Katrina reconstruction. Average attendance, 30-35.

2. **Rocky Point Church, Carthage:** Average attendance, 101; two professions of faith; Betty Jenkins, director.

3. **West Marks Church, Marks:** Ethelyn Morris, director; John Shackleford, pastor.

4. **Mt. Vernon Church, Eupora:** July, with \$900 collected for purchasing six wheelchairs. Shown are the participants.

5. **First Church, Oloh:** Shown are the six-year-olds and their teachers.

6. **Steele Church, Forest:** Enrollment of 103; average attendance, 88; four professions of faith. \$280 offering collected for Rod and Mary Lynn Varner, Sebastopol,

missionaries in Asia. Tiffany Lathem, director; Charnell assistant; Reggie Williams, pastor.

7. **Northside Church, Vicksburg:** June 4-8; average of 93 nightly; one profession of faith. Shown are the participants.



7. Northside Church, Vicksburg

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For information, reservations, brochure, and Rev. Williams' letter call:

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MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, POPLARVILLE, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational/part time minister of music. Persons interested in applying for the position may send e-mail inquiries, and/or attached resumes to fbcpop@bellsouth.net.

MINISTER OF MUSIC and education needed: First Baptist Church, Boyle, Miss., is currently seeking a full-time minister of music and education. More details available. Contact us at fb Boyle@ cableone.net. Send resumes via email or P.O. Box 218, Boyle, MS 38730.

CHURCH SECRETARY NEEDED in Flowood area, 32 hour work week. Previous experience required. Please fax resume to (601) 992-4242.

ARE YOU LOOKING TO SERVE in a young exciting and growing church? County Line Baptist Church is seeking part-time (for now) youth pastor. Mail resumes to youth pastor search committee, P.O. Box 578, Crystal Springs, MS 39059-9715 or call pastor's cell number (662) 312-8564 or church (601) 892-1151.

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FBC OLOH IS SEEKING a part-time music director to instruct choirs and lead worship services. Please call (601) 264-8868 or (601) 408-6005 or email fbcoloh@megagate.com.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH/ MUSIC. Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, MS is seeking a full-time minister of youth and/or music. Please send resume' to Personnel Committee, 712 McAllister Street, Greenville, MS 38701 or email to parkviewp@bellsouth.net.

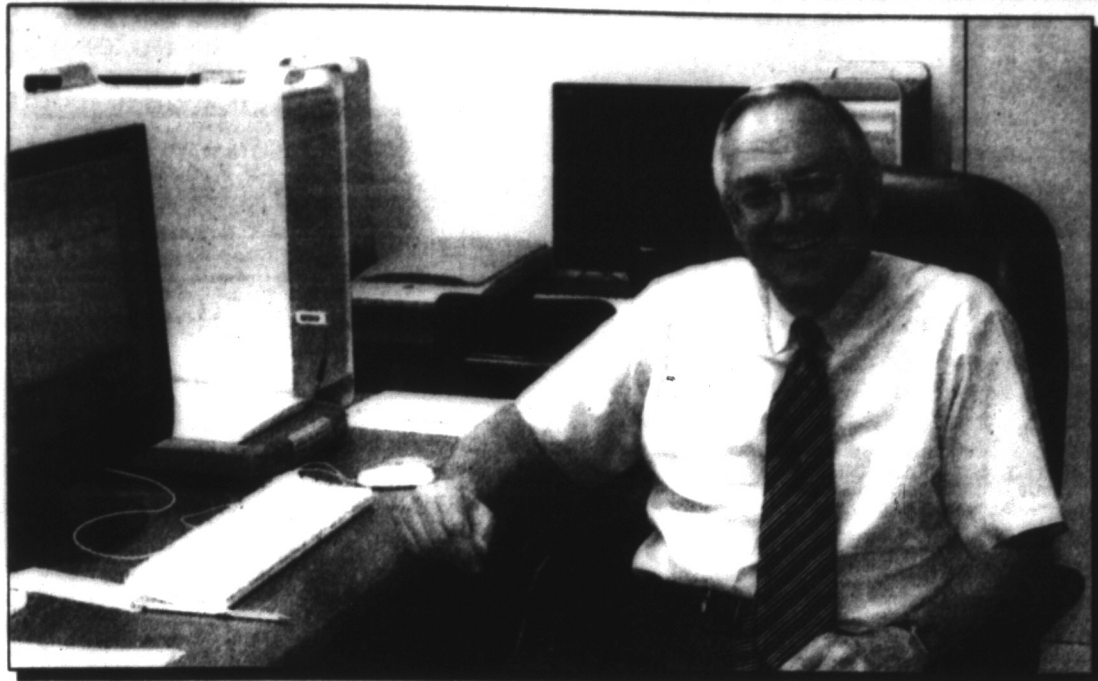
HICKORY RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH, Florence, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music. Average church attendance 150. Please send resume to search committee, 1857 Florence Byram Rd., Florence, MS 39073. Or email to resume@hickoryridgebaptist.org. College students welcome to apply.

ROSE HILL FBC, ROSE HILL, MS is seeking a bi-vocational worship leader/minister of music. Please send resumes to Rose Hill FBC P.O. Box 1 Rose Hill, MS 39356, attn: Worship Leader search committee. Or email ebmartin@bayspringstel.net. View website: www.rosehillfbc.org. Pastor: Bro. Eddie Martin.

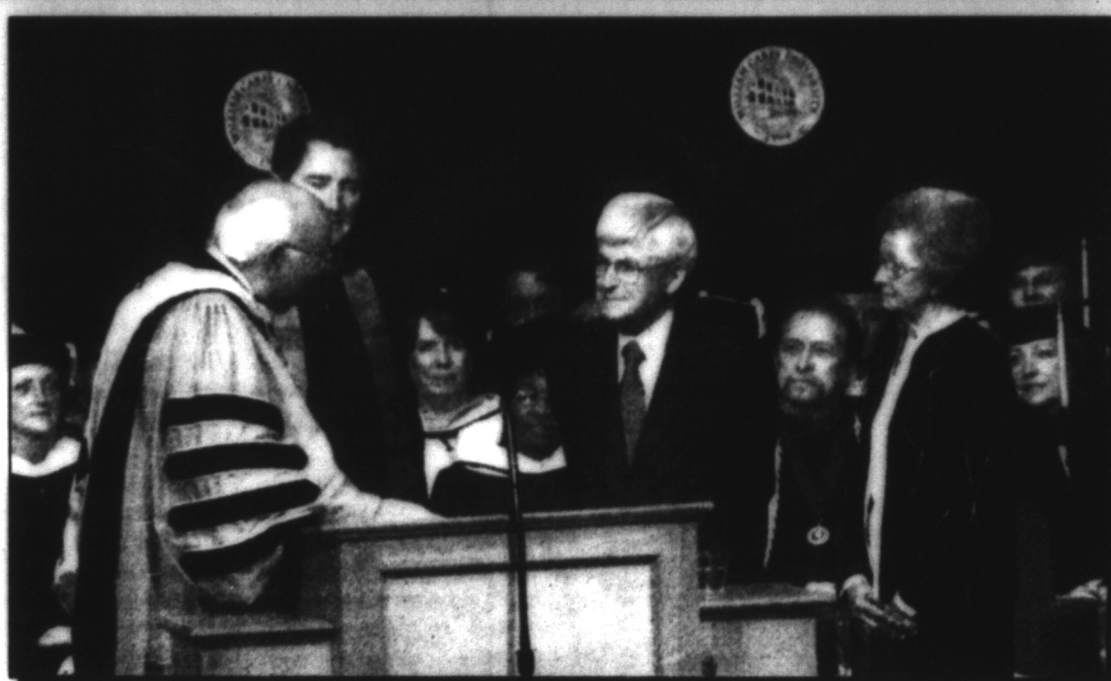
BRIAR HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, seeking a full-time associate pastor of music and worship ministries. Please mail all resumes to Briar Hill Baptist Church, P.O. Box 129, Florence, MS 39073, attn: music search committee by 8/27/07.

BROOKSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, Brooksville, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational music director. Send resumes to Janice Kesler, music chairman, 2922 Fire Tower Rd., Crawford, MS 39743.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, located on 49 south in Braxton, Miss., seeking a part-time minister of music. Send resumes to Calvary Baptist Church, attn: music committee, P.O. Box 111, Braxton, MS 39044.



4. Hataway honored, MC



5. Nookesters honored, WCU

1. **Mississippi College's** ranking in overall quality has climbed a few notches in the latest U.S. News & World Report survey of America's colleges and universities. The magazine's America's Best Colleges report released Friday shows MC moved up to 20th place among the South's Best Universities at the master's degree level, up from 29 a year ago. The magazine measured schools' retention rates, alumni giving, class size, graduation rates, ACT scores and the percentage of students in the top 25 percent of their high school class. U.S. News & World Report also rates the Christian University in Clinton in sixth place among Southern master's universities — unchanged from a year ago — when evaluating the school's quality in light of its costs.

2. Stacy Reeves, assistant professor of education at **William Carey University**, has been chosen from among thousands of educators nationwide as an Emerging Leader by Phi Delta Kappa International, a leading association of education professionals.



Reeves

3. **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary** and **Blue Mountain College** have forged a partnership to bring masters-level seminary training to North Mississippi, officials at the two schools announced. The agreement, signed by New Orleans Seminary President Chuck Kelley and Blue Mountain College President Bettye Coward, authorizes the establishment of a new NOBTS

North Mississippi Extension Center on the Blue Mountain Campus. The center will begin offering coursework toward New Orleans Seminary's standard master of divinity degree in January 2008.

4. **Mississippi College** graphic design coordinator Michael Hataway has been honored for the seventh time in Who's Who Among American Teachers & Educators. Hathaway, 61 "retired" from Hinds Community College in 2004 and began at MC soon afterwards.

5. Tommy King, president of **William Carey University**, and Stan Burton, Ellisville, and chairman of the WCU Board of Trustees, honored Ralph and Naomi Noonkester during the opening convocation held on the first day of classes. WCU named the Ralph and Naomi Noonkester School of Arts and Letters in their honor.

6. **Mississippi College's** School of Business is undergoing more than \$1.1 million in renovations at Self Hall, and MC leaders have scheduled two events this fall to showcase the improvements. Beginning next month, the public will get the opportunity to see the progress. The first will be at an open house and accounting class dedication Sept. 25. MC faculty, accounting students, alumni, donors and others will be invited. The program begins at 5:30 p.m. On October 19, MC's School of Business will again invite visitors to tour the facility during an open house that will be part of Homecoming weekend activities. The event begins at 4:30 p.m. Adding to the numbers, MC's School of Business this fall launched a new master's in business administration degree with a concentration in accounting.

HOMEcoming & REVIVALS

Bolton Church, Bolton: Homecoming and 70th anniversary, Sept. 16; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Jackie Banes, pastor.

Concord Church, Booneville: Revival, Sept. 16-20; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. nightly; meal, 5:30 p.m. Sun.; Shane Evetts, speaker; Loveless Family, music.

Elon Church, Macon: Homecoming and revival, Sept. 9-12; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Matthews, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.

First Church, McLaurin: Homecoming, Sept. 9; Graham Hale, speaker.

Holly Springs Church, Brookhaven: Revival, Sept. 16-19; Sun., 10:45 a.m., followed by potluck and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Willis Family, Heartbeat Evangelistic Ministries, speaker and music.

Lakeshore Church, Jackson: Homecoming and 30th anniversary, Sept. 23; Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by home-cooked dinner and music by the Down Home Band.

New Providence Church, Carthage: Homecoming, Sept. 16; registration, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m., followed by lunch and fellowship; Smith Sanders, speaker and pastor.

Trinity Church, Laurel: Revival, Sept. 16-19; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Johnny Sykes, speaker; Joseph Walters, music; Keith Yelverton, pastor.



Church caught in sex offender flap

CHICAGO (BP) — A small Chicago-area Southern Baptist church knowingly allowed a convicted sex offender to preach and serve in high-level leadership in the past few years, although the director of missions for that area says he did everything in his power to stop it.

The convicted man, Jeff Hannah, since has resigned his position at First Church in Romeoville, Ill., a congregation that now is down to about 21 people and considering the possibility of folding. The resignation took place after the Chicago Sun-Times, which first reported the story, approached Hannah and others at the church about the matter.

Hannah was sentenced in 1996 to nine years in prison for having sexual relations with girls ages 15-17 while he was a married youth pastor at Crossroads Church in Libertyville, Ill., the newspaper reported. He was paroled in 2001 and joined First Church, Romeoville, where his new wife was a member. When the pastor left, the church asked Hannah to serve as the interim, even though it was known that he was a convicted sexual offender.

"In our church, we believe in forgiveness," Del Kirkpatrick, a deacon at the church, told the Sun-Times.

Dan Eddington, director of missions for the Three Rivers Association — of which the church voluntarily is a member — said that when he heard about Hannah's past, he urged the church to remove him from leadership roles.

"Once I learned of it, we began to take immediate action," Eddington told Baptist Press. "I made numerous phone calls to his

previous church, to the district attorney's office. Our attempt was to try to get the church to recognize that they could be redemptive with Jeff and have him be in the fellowship but not in the leadership. That was our real goal."

Eddington learned of Hannah's past when a church that was considering hiring Hannah from First Church, Romeoville, conducted a background check — a simple check that Southern Baptist officials have urged all churches to conduct on potential volunteers and employees.

Someone from that church then contacted Eddington with the news. Eddington said he talked with First Church, Romeoville's new pastor, but nothing was done and Hannah remained on the church's staff.

Some church members, Eddington said, believed that Hannah had been involved with only one girl, and one he thought to be much older and an adult. They did not know, Eddington said, that Hannah had sexual relations with three girls he knew to be minors. When those members earlier this year found out the full story about Hannah, a special business meeting was called to consider Hannah's removal from leadership, Eddington added. There were approximately 30-40 people in the church at the time.

The story got even more surreal Aug. 21 when the Sun-Times reported that as interim pastor in 2006, Hannah invited one of his neighbors, Bryan Buckley — who also is a former convicted sexual offender who served jail time — to lead music at one service. Buckley and Hannah apparently met in prison, the newspaper said.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through the creative, meaningful and helpful medium of The Village View. Gifts of Honor and Memory are being accepted for the month of August.

AUG. 13-26, 2007

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Ms. Jesse Braswell
Magee Men's SSC, Ackerman BC
Ms. Lynn Hutchinson
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Ms. Loni Johnson
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Arlene Wilkinson
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Grayson Williamson
Mr. & Mrs. Herman L. Dungan Jr.
Russell Willingham
Ms. Peggy Wilkerson

School Needs List:



- X-Large back packs for High School students
- 8 basic color water color paint sets
- Adult-sized (no pocket) white t-shirts
- Clorox wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Math flash cards
- Ultra-fine and fine point Sharpie brand markers
- Zip-Lock One Zip storage bags (gallon and quart)
- Paperback dictionaries
- Poster board
- Science fair boards

Stay up to date with The BCV

news and other happenings at

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

The Baptist Children's Village
is scheduling campus tours, projects
and speaking engagements for the fall
and the calendar is filling quickly.

If your church would like to schedule
something for your women's or men's ministry
please contact Mrs. Chrystelle Thames
at 601-922-2242
or thames@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Who Me? A Leader?

Joshua 1:1-18

By Alice Smith

The lessons for September will be taken from the Book of Joshua. This series of four lessons will approach the study of Joshua from the viewpoint of responsibility and leadership. In this first study, we will look at an exciting and startling premise of leadership.

The title of this lesson is a provocative one. Perhaps the furthest thing from your mind is that you could possibly be a leader, or, as the dictionary definition reads, "A person who leads others along a way; a guide." "Oh, no," you may say, "I am shy. I don't want to be the leader in anything." Some of you may be saying, "I don't want to lead. I'm a good follower. Everyone can't be a leader." For

many of us, when faced with a situation requiring some form of action, our initial reaction is one of panic, with a distinct element of fear.

But I believe that we must all be leaders in the spiritual sense. As we go through our days, you may be just the person God wants to use to touch a life. He may ask you to be His voice, His touch and the one to guide others along His path.

We learn much from these verses in Joshua 1:1-18. The spiritual elements that compose this word of "leadership" are strong and clear.

(1) God speaks. God makes a promise in Joshua 1:5 (NAS): No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with

Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you.

(2) God commands: And he gives it not once, but three times in vs. 6, 7, and 9. In Joshua 1:9 He says: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the

Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Interestingly, the same words appear in Deuteronomy 31:7 (NAS) when Moses felt it important to emphasize the same words: Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. Could it be that Joshua was feeling inadequate and fearful and needed the reassurance of God? And later in Joshua 1:18, these same words are spoken by

the officers of the people after Joshua assumes command of the people in obedience to God and gives the officers their directions. The officers respond to his charge giving Joshua their pledge of obedience and then they say in vs. 18, "Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."

So, do not be timid and fearful as you are called to leadership, whether in leading a group or leading in the life of an individual. God promises to be with us and he will give us His words and His actions that we need in order to be effective leaders.

We are both followers and leaders. Obedience and leadership go together. We are to be obedient to God and His commandments as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and we are to be strong and courageous as we encounter situations in our culture today that require our spiritual leadership and a strong Christian witness.

In closing, we must mention a most important component to leadership as given by Jesus. This is the teaching found in Luke 22:25-26 (NAS) that we must be "servant leaders." In these verses Jesus says: (25) "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.'" (26) "But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant." The strongest attribute of a godly leader is humbleness. Search yourself every day and humble yourself before God in your quest to be sincerely humble.

Yes, we are all leaders. There are no exceptions. Be strong and of good courage and follow Christ without apology so we can be His leaders and guide men to the Way and the Truth and the Life. Remember: Listen to God; Obey; Be Courageous; Be a Servant. Lead on!

Smith is a member of First Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God's Unique Son

Matthew 1:18-23, 7-11

By Michael Smith

The Christmas story in September? It is 95 degrees outside. The Atlanta Braves are still playing baseball on television. Summer vacation has just ended and the kids have finally returned to school. We are still paying for last year's Christmas presents. This certainly NOT the season. Sometimes, however, it is helpful to study the "Christmas Story" apart from the busyness and the trappings of the Christmas season.

Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with a story of the birth of a child. The birth of a child is a special occasion for any family. It's just not all that unique. Children are born on a very regular basis. In fact, statistics show that 4.1 children are born somewhere in the world every second. What is it about the birth recorded in

Matthew 1:18-25 that is uncommon? What is so unique about this child that demands our genuine worship? What is the only appropriate response when we encounter the Son of God?

1. The Son to Worship, (Matthew 1:18-25)

Mary, the young girl from Nazareth, was a pregnant virgin. This paradox serves as a reminder that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). This paradox also serves as a reminder that the son Mary would soon give birth to was no ordinary child who would be born under ordinary circumstances. Matthew boldly and unapologetically declares: "The birth of Jesus came about this way..." (Matthew 1:18). The conception of Jesus was a divine miracle of miracles. The

incarnation of God into human flesh is the quintessential expression of God's love and grace.

Through this unique birth, Jesus would come into the world in order to fulfill God's plan of redemption. The

implication of this supremely important event is captured by the designations "Jesus," and "Immanuel." Joseph was instructed by the angel to name his son Jesus (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus is the Greek equivalent of Joshua which literally means "Yahweh saves." The second designation is "Immanuel" (Matthew 1:23). The name Immanuel literally means "God is with us," and fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The name Jesus designates what he came to do — "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

2. The Desire to Worship the Son, (Matthew 2:1-3, 7-8)

The mysterious men from the East showed up in Jerusalem by

way of a supernatural star. The wise men were seekers of the truth and learned advisors to people in high places. One evening they were searching the stars for a deeper understanding of a deep truth when God gripped their imaginations with His star that divinely revealed the birth of a new king — the birth of the King of kings. The wise men began a long journey from the East that they might encounter this new King. Though the wise men were directed by the star, they were driven by their deep desire to worship the King of kings. Matthew clearly identifies the objective of their trip: "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:1). In a divine manner, God had planted in the hearts and the minds of the wise men that this newborn child was no mere king of a tiny swath of land.

3. The Way to Worship the Son, (Matthew 2:9-11)

The wise men's long journey ended at the feet of Jesus. By

the time the wise men's search ended, Jesus was most likely just over a year in age. The response of the wise men before Jesus is dramatic: they fell down to their knees and worshipped him. The scene must have looked curious! Men of profound substance and stature kneeled down at the feet of a runny-nose toddler. The learned dignitaries humbled themselves before the Son of God. They presented Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The significance of their offerings is not reflected in the monetary value of the gifts, but in the submissive spirit in which they were presented. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were of little value to a toddler, but as an expression of worship these gifts were priceless. Though the wise men's journey ended at the feet of Jesus, that's where our worship begins. We worship the Son of God by humbly surrendering all that we are and submitting all that we have to the glory of Immanuel.

Smith is pastor of Bethel Church, Monticello.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) type-written, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

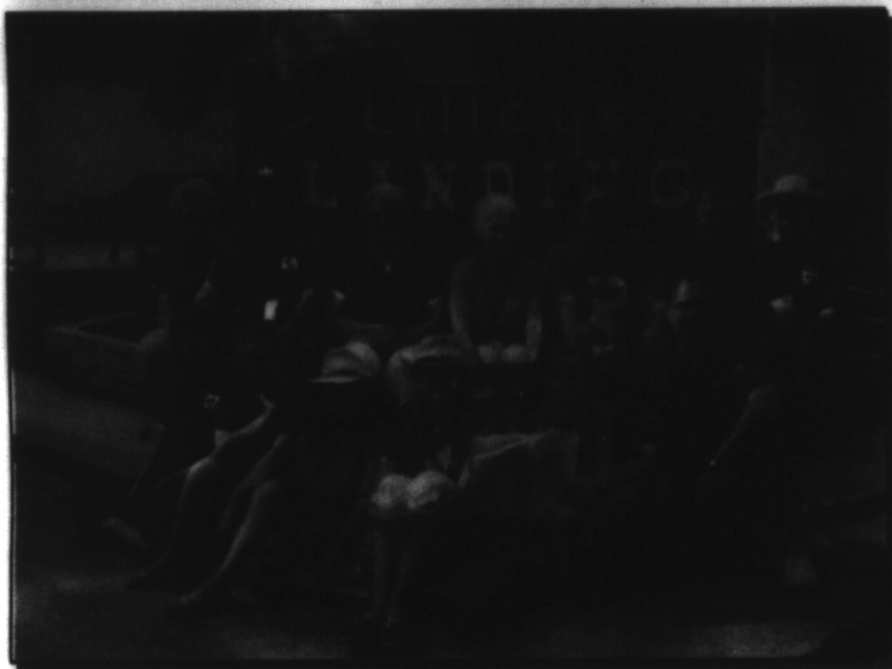
All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Mission Trip, Concord Church, Franklin Association



2. Dad/Lad Weekend, Branch Church, Morton



3. Groundbreaking Ceremony, First Church, Kosciusko

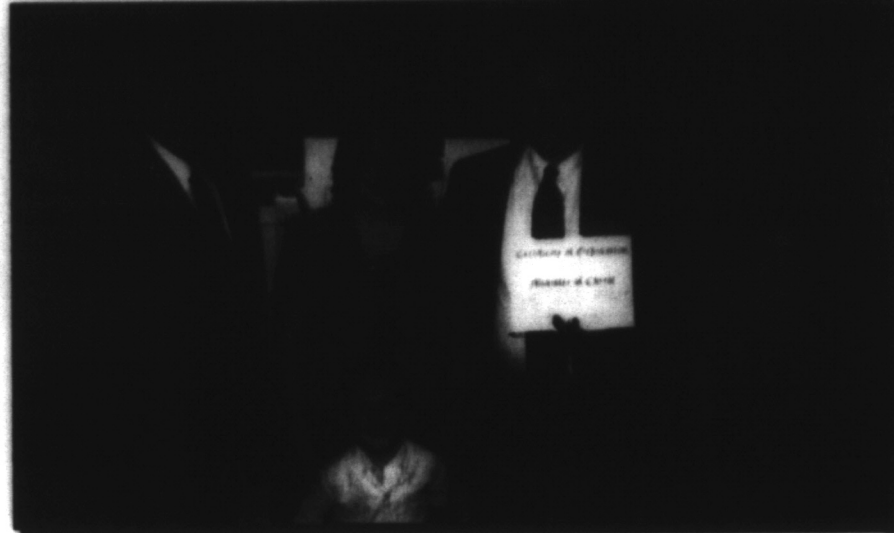
1. Concord Church, Franklin Association, sponsored a mission trip to Branson, Mo., to conduct a Backyard Bible Club at Lilley's Landing Resort. Shown are members of the team representing Concord and Mt. Pleasant Church, Lincoln Association.

2. Branch Church, Morton, recently participated in Dad/Lad weekend at Central Hills near Kosciusko. Shown are Owen Wolfe, Zachary Irby, Micheal Ray Latham, and Noah Wolfe.

3. First Church, Kosciusko, held a groundbreaking ceremony July 29 on their new nursery, preschool, and child care building. Shown are pastor Barry Corbett, Jennifer Cheek, Martha Burnham, Ray Burrell, Charlie Hudson, Doug King, Jerry Price, and Tim Songster.

4. Topeka Church, Jayess, ordained John Rushing August 12. Rushing has been called to pastor Centerville Church, Tylertown. Shown are pastor Dale Authement, Dori Rushing, Rushing, and children Brennan and Quade.

5. Central Church, Byram, recognizes its 2007 deacons; ordination service held May 27. Shown are Charlie Martin, Robert Burney, Larry Dillon, Arthur Bates, pastor Mark Bullock, Tom Rayburn, Jimmy McCardle, Al Rutland, and William Patrick.



4. Rushing Ordained to Ministry, Topeka Church, Jayess



5. Deacon Ordinations, Central Church, Byram

6. Lakeside Church, Hattiesburg, held its third 5th Sunday sing July 29 with the Pettis Family ministering. Roy Moody, pastor.

7. At the Legacy Dessert Party, held during the 2007 WMU Missions Celebration in San Antonio, Tex., Charlotte Scott and Tammy Pearson

from First Church, Jackson, presented Wanda Lee and David George with a check for \$10,000 for the Joy Fund. Scott is the WMU director and Pearson is the Women on Mission president at First Church. The gift came from an endowment at First Church left by Margaret Bryan Allen.

Mexican Baptists mostly dodge storm

MERIDA, Mexico (BP) — A Southern Baptist missionary in the Yucatan Peninsula reported that the Mexican government appears well-organized in meeting the immediate needs of residents after Hurricane Dean became the third most intense storm in history to strike in the Atlantic region.

Homer Hawthorne reported that the pastors of Baptist churches in Chetumal visited their members' homes after the storm passed in order to assess needs.

"All the members are well with the exception of loss of material things. Several of [them] lost all they had and many lost the roofs to their houses. Others had up to two feet of water in their houses," Hawthorne wrote to International Mission Board officials Aug. 21.

In Merida, where Hawthorne lives, strong wind gusts were accompanied by sunshine once Dean passed the peninsula and headed for the central coast of Mexico, where it hit as a Category 2 hurricane.

The storm had first made landfall in a sparsely populated region Tuesday as a Category 5, the strongest since Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

"At this time we don't have electricity and are running a fan and computer on a generator," Hawthorne wrote from Merida. "...We talked several times through the night and early this morning with our Baptist folks in

Chetumal. They didn't have electricity but phone service. Then again this afternoon we talked with them by phone after they were able to get out of their houses."

Hawthorne said the federal and state governments in Mexico are well organized, having brought in truckloads of relief materials three to seven days before the hurricane hit.

The government reportedly is distributing mattresses, blankets, food packets and roofing sheets to residents of Chetumal.

"There are 1,500 to 2,000 soldiers deployed for security and distribution of relief," the missionary reported. "Along with them there are two medical teams with 19 making up a team for the state of Quintana Roo and 23 for the southern part of the state of Yucatan."

Teams had been dispatched to restore electricity to the hard-hit areas, and Hawthorne received word that all electricity would be working again within days.

He added that many residents are without landline telephone service but their cell phones are working.

Hawthorne said the cities receive most of the attention after a natural disaster, so he and other workers were evaluating the needs in rural areas.

"Hopefully we can coordinate our efforts well with the government and fill in the gaps within our possibilities," he wrote.

Hillcrest Baptist Birthday Celebration

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2007, 9 AM - 11:30 AM

Remember the past, celebrating the present, looking to the future

11:30 am Dinner on the grounds

Children will have their own worship service with puppets, games and more.

For information call 601-372-0132, www.hillcrestbyram.com